

Foundations for the Future

Annual Report
2019-2020



**Vision
Australia**

Blindness. Low Vision. Opportunity.

On the cover (clockwise):
Seeing Eye Dog Xian; Xavier using a video magnifier to learn about dinosaurs;
Vision Australia orientation and mobility specialist Nicole Migani-Roberts with client Emmanuel using an iPhone and white cane.

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Top to bottom: Christine and Seeing Eye Dog Yoshi on a Sydney train; Raphael enjoying the unique and interactive therapeutic space at the Kensington sensory room.



Why we exist



Our mission

To support people who are blind or have low vision to live the life they choose.



Our values

The way we work with people and interact with each other is driven by our values: **person-centred, accountable, collaborative, commercially focused and agile.**



Priority areas

Our future lies in a lifetime of support that has a measurable and positive impact in four key areas important to our clients: **education, employment, independence and social inclusion.**



Head + Heart = Success

Each day, all of us at Vision Australia brings the best of our heads and our hearts to work. 'Success' comes in a variety of forms, including seeing more of our clients achieving their goals.

Following the enthusiastic adoption of our Head + Heart = Success strategy, this year we focused on highlighting the success stories of our teams and clients, to clearly demonstrate how using both our 'business head' as well as our heart leads to a whole variety of successes.

Improvements in efficiency and productivity in all areas of our operations means we are able to support more people who are blind or have low vision, and provide a higher quality of services.

As Chair and CEO of Vision Australia, we are pleased to present the 2020 annual report.

This year, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented the world with unprecedented challenges and disruptions, but Vision Australia is resolute about its mission, values and priorities. We have adapted to these and other challenges swiftly and compassionately, always conscious of our mission to support people who are blind or have low vision to live the life they choose.

Our clients, staff, volunteers, and donors have experienced the global pandemic in many different ways. It was evident during this time of crisis that we had to adapt and support people in the various ways they each needed.

As many of you will know, our current three-year strategy is underpinned by the principles of service, simplification and sustainability, and these have been our focus throughout the year, particularly as the pandemic spread.

We have continued to keep our clients at the centre of everything we do. This year we supported 34,855 people, 25,499 of whom received an allied health service, such as occupational therapy, orthoptics, and speech and language therapy.

We have also increased the consistency and quality of our services by reducing complexity across the organisation, and have implemented several physical and organisational changes to further ensure our sustainability.

Adhering to these principles meant we were well-positioned to respond to the unique challenges that arose from the global pandemic. The Board and leadership team quickly implemented several initiatives to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our clients, staff, and volunteers. With a clear goal of maintaining delivery of our services to our clients without compromising quality or accessibility, everyone worked diligently to do whatever needed to be done. The results are not only gratifying, but inspiring.

Within days of identifying the need to change how we operated, our entire workforce successfully moved to work from home, and this was achieved seamlessly thanks to recent investments to update our information and communications technology.

We also rapidly extended the reach of our telehealth services, mainly used in the past to support our regional and rural clients. After wide-spread use during the pandemic, they are now accepted as another effective tool to provide timely delivery to support our clients.

We are grateful to everyone, especially our clients, for adapting rapidly to telehealth based services, including the many clients who learned new technology skills so that they could continue to participate in our online recreation programs.

Despite the challenges of the year, we are pleased to report a financial surplus. Factors contributing to this positive result include the consolidation of sustainability improvements we made in FY20, a one-off capital gain derived from the sale of some property, and eligibility to the Federal Government's JobKeeper program.

As always, this year's successes have been possible because of the magnificent contributions of many people, and we would like to thank the thousands of donors, our numerous corporate partners, and the many businesses, organisations and governments that support our work. Around 40% of our annual operating turnover is charitable donations, making them vital to the continued delivery of our services. Given the economic environment caused by the pandemic, we are especially thankful that this has not materially changed the support we receive from our dedicated donors.

We also recognise the Vision Australia Board for their leadership and governance, and farewell Sara Watts whose contribution, particularly on the Audit Finance and Risk Committee, as well as the Vision Australia Foundation and the Board, has been remarkable.

Finally, we are grateful for the continued passion shown by our Vision Australia team, including our many volunteers, whose hard work and dedication to our clients is evident every single day.



Andrew Moffat
Chair
Vision Australia



Ron Hooton
CEO
Vision Australia



Ron Hooton, CEO (left) with Andrew Moffat, Chair (right)

Highlights from 2019/20



Paul Kapeleris, legally blind since birth, plays piano at Carols by Candlelight 2019. As Carols by Candlelight Ambassador, 23-year-old Paul thrilled audiences with a stunning rendition of *Silent Night*.



Local children enjoyed exploring our Feelix Library kits at a community event in Wollongong. Feelix kits come with items that give children a tactile experience of the story (in the photo, it's a toy cow and bucket), and are one of the many ways children who live with blindness, low vision, or any other print disability, are able to access written material.



Vision Australia paediatric occupational therapist, Hannah Sutherland, and clients Liam and Isaac standing beside a new braille sign at the all-abilities playground in Luke's Place, in Corrimal, NSW.



Gordon Gray holding his winning work of art in the 2020 Vision Australia calendar artwork competition. Gordon is one of 15 artists who are blind or have low vision whose artwork was published in the 2020 calendar and diary.



2019 Vision Australia Award winners, from left to right, David Hodgson, Nadia Mattiazzo, and Tim Boyle. These annual awards identify, celebrate and thank the generous organisations and individuals who give their time and resources to support our work.



16-year-old Matthew with NSW Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, Gareth Ward, at NSW's Parliament House. Both Matthew and Gareth were born with oculocutaneous albinism.



Seeing Eye Dogs senior puppy development trainer, Kim Rulach, and puppy development manager, Jane Bradley, were at Melbourne's Southern Cross Station on February 14 – otherwise known as PAentine's Day – raising awareness of our Puppy Caring program.



Children in Newcastle took part in lightsaber battles with combat theatre company, the Sons of Obiwan Saber Academy as part of a local school holiday program for children who are blind or have low vision.

Our year in numbers

833 clients participated in

80,963

hours of recreation support services



44,035

hours of occupational therapy provided

21,881

hours of access technology service provided

2,341 active volunteers contributed

948,596

hours of time

 **PERTH**

 **DARWIN**



Over **\$823,000**

raised at the 2019 Vision Australia's Carols by Candlelight to support 1,961 children

160,000

print pages converted into accessible formats:



98,700 Braille master pages

15,835 e-text pages

66,200 large print pages

4,020 tactual graphics

WIN

Cairns

Townsville

NSW Spectacles Program delivered

54,197

spectacles to 37,479 clients

Maroochydore

BRISBANE

Gold Coast

Lismore

Coffs Harbour

Tamworth

Newcastle

Orange

Gosford

ADELAIDE

Mildura

Wagga Wagga

SYDNEY

Wollongong

CANBERRA

Shepparton

Bendigo

Ballarat

Geelong

MELBOURNE

Bairnsdale

Warragul

Warrnambool

34,855

Vision Australia clients
(including retail, library)

1,271

inquiries to our Access
Technology help line

HOBART



8,167

clients accessed library services

For nearly 25 years, Vision Australia has awarded further education bursaries to more than 400 students who are blind or have low vision.

This year, we awarded 21 bursaries, supporting recipients to study in an impressive and diverse range of fields, including information technology, mechatronics engineering, business, HR management, human services, teaching, counselling, nutrition, and music.

For 20-year-old Caitlin Jung, receiving a bursary removed a number of challenges she'd experienced while studying at university with low vision. Completing her Bachelor of Pharmacy at the University of Canberra, Caitlin now has a laptop, headphones, a large-screen



Above: Caitlin Jung, who is completing a Bachelor of Pharmacy at the University of Canberra, is one of 21 recipients of a Further Education Bursary this year.

monitor with desktop clamp, ZoomText software, and a large-print keyboard, all thanks to the bursary. "Taking notes is ten times easier, and I can work longer," she said. After completing her degree, Caitlin is planning to move into GP pharmacy patient counselling, where she will be working one-on-one with patients.

The further education bursaries are made possible thanks to the generosity of our donors.

Vision Australia advocates strongly for the rights of people who are blind or have low vision to enjoy the life-changing benefits of education and training at all levels.

Advocacy at tertiary level

Accessing higher education can present its own specific set of challenges, and for this reason, our advocacy work involves improving accessibility to tertiary education.

This year, we developed and conducted a webinar for Disability Support Officers working in universities and TAFEs, aimed at making them better informed about the need to advocate for people who are blind or have low vision, and to improve the effectiveness of their advocacy. In particular, the webinar focused on what they could do to improve accessibility to online learning education and platforms.



Above: *Maisy's Fire Engine* is just one of more than 800 titles in our popular Felix Library.

Feelix Children's Library

For 17 years, the Feelix Library has contributed to the development of literacy in children aged zero to seven and provided invaluable educational support to families and educators.

This year, dozens of new titles were added to the library's collection of over 800 books that are delivered to members in our special braille and tactile storybook kits. In addition, the Feelix Library bags received a much-needed facelift.

More than 500 families and schools enjoy and appreciate Feelix kits that deliver the magic of stories and storytelling to children across Australia who are blind or have low vision.

Code Jumper

In February 2020, Vision Australia launched an award-winning educational tool called Code Jumper that opens up the world of computer coding to children who are blind or have low vision.

Aimed at students aged from seven to eleven, Code Jumper helps children learn the basics of computer coding and programming, regardless of their level of vision. Using an app and a tactile system of oversized buttons, knobs and cords, students learn by touching and listening. As it's suitable also for fully sighted children, it encourages all students to work together, and helps them build confidence through socialisation, cooperation, critical thinking and hands-on learning.

Research shows that just 24% of Australians who are blind or have low vision are in full-time employment, so tools like Code Jumper have an important role to play in lifting that figure, by providing students with valuable STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) skills.



Above: Blake and Elliott with their mother Tammy experimenting (and having fun!) with Code Jumper, alongside Vision Australia's product advisor Tony Wu.



Above, right: As well as being our largest fundraising event, Carols by Candlelight is a Christmas tradition for thousands of families in Australia.

Carols by Candlelight

This year's Carols by Candlelight was again highly successful, raising over \$823,000 to support our services for children who are blind or have low vision. Held annually on Christmas Eve, it is our biggest fundraising event, and the generosity of Australians never disappoints.

Notable outcomes from this year's Carols include a sum of \$25,000 raised by the 3AW VIP Lounge Auction in the lead-up to the Carols, a 33% increase in funds raised during the broadcast of the Carols, and a 6% increase in the number of donors, all of which suggests this will continue to be a popular and successful event.

We're especially appreciative of the loyal support of our partners who have helped create a Christmas tradition for thousands of Australian families. The 2019 Carols marked the 40th year of the Nine Network being our broadcast partner, and the 60th year of the Carols being hosted at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl. Watched by 2.3 million people across Australia, Carols by Candlelight is always a magical event that touches the hearts of Australians and provides funds that make a real difference in the lives of children we support.

Employment

Each year, Vision Australia's Career Start program offers talented graduates who are blind or have low vision the opportunity to kick-start their career.

For nine months, they complete a paid placement at Vision Australia, followed by a three-month paid placement with another employer. Approximately 80% of the graduates who complete the program find meaningful employment because not only have they developed networks and skills, they've also gained real experience while building their confidence.

One of the 2019 participants, 28-year-old Brooke joined the program after she graduated from university with a Bachelor of Social Work with Honours. During her placement with Medibank Private, she was offered a full-time role as a customer care consultant.

"The Career Start program is about finding out what your skills are and tailoring a role to suit those skills," Brooke said. "Working at Vision Australia gave me the confidence to go into a new workplace, do my job and get the outcomes I want."

Career Start is possible thanks to generous philanthropic support.

Studio 1: a new and refreshing perspective on current affairs

First hitting the airwaves in February 2020, Studio 1 is hosted by producer and presenter Matthew Layton, who brings to it more than 20 years of experience in radio as well as his lived experience with low vision. Using a panel-style format, the program explores a different current affairs topic each week from the perspective of panel members who are blind or have low vision.

Fully funded by the Community Broadcasting Foundation, Studio 1 is available on Vision Australia Radio, VA Radio Digital, on demand, and as a podcast.



Above: Radio producer and presenter, Matthew Layton, contemplating the next Studio 1 episode he's about to host.



Above: Ian Edwards, a chef who is blind, Vision Australia chairman Andrew Moffat and Dr. Karen Wolffe during the Q & A panel discussion at this year's Careers Sampler event.

Careers Sampler: helping young people explore future career possibilities

In March 2020, we held our second Careers Sampler event, designed for children and adolescents who are blind or have low vision, their families, and educators. Careers Sampler features mentors and panellists who share their personal stories of how, as people who are blind or have low vision, they found rewarding careers that fit their skills, experiences and interests.

After last year's successful inaugural event in Sydney, we decided to expand Careers Sampler to include Melbourne and Brisbane, lifting our participation numbers to 119 attendees and 36 mentors, as well as many staff and volunteers.

This year's keynote address was delivered in Sydney by educator and counsellor Dr Karen Wolffe, who then facilitated a Q & A with a panel comprised of two board directors, a chef who is blind and a fashion designer with low vision. Both the keynote address and Q & A session were available to our Melbourne and Brisbane participants via Zoom.

After the formal activities, attendees at each location moved into small groups to meet and talk with local mentors, who were grouped according to industries.

Listening to other people's journeys reminds children, young people and their families, and educators that it's never too early to start identifying career aspirations, implementing strategies, acquiring skills, and planning for their future employment so they can make informed decisions.

LEAPing outside comfort zones

This year we implemented a highly successful expansion of our LEAP program (Learn, Engage, Act, Perform), first initiated in 2019.

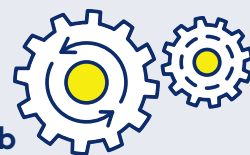
Designed to develop the job-seeking and leadership skills of young people aged from 14 to 17 who are blind or have low vision, LEAP offers experiences that range from participating in mock employment interviews to designing and implementing a fundraising activity. This broad range of activities helps to develop participants' emotional intelligence and confidence, as well as interpersonal and presentation skills. The program also encourages social interaction between participants, and this year's 15 participants from around Australia formed strong bonds that have continued beyond the end of the nine-month program.

Participants particularly enjoyed gaining insight into leadership from the one-on-one sessions they each had with mentors, and the presentations from ambassadors from LinkedIn, Melbourne Fashion Festival and Vision Australia (including our CEO). Other valuable experiences included learning how to polish their resumes and cover letters, and how to develop and deliver a spur-of-the-moment 'elevator pitch'.

Building on the success of the past two years, we're looking forward to being able to offer LEAP to an increased number of participants in 2021.



Above: Our wood workshops in Kensington and Coorparoo give people the opportunity to learn new skills.



Upgrading Learning Hub

In February 2020, we launched a new online platform that helps staff access and manage information about their professional development. After logging into the new Learning Hub, staff can view details about training they've completed, self-enrol into scheduled courses, see what mandatory training they need to complete, and undertake online courses whenever it suits them. The system also generates accurate reports of completion and learning outcomes, helping to ensure we properly manage all aspects of our staff's development.

The biggest advantage of the new platform is that it easily integrates with applications such as the JAWS screen reader and ZoomText magnifier, improving accessibility for our employees and volunteers who are blind or have low vision. In addition, it has a built-in accessibility checker that helps us detect potential accessibility issues in our courses.

Vision Australia: living our commitment to employ from within our community

This year, Vision Australia again achieved our target of at least 15% of our workforce being people who are blind or have low vision.

In addition, our Employment Services placed 79 job seekers with external employers across a wide range of occupational categories, and conducted 139 assessments for external companies hiring people with blindness or low vision. These assessments help employers identify appropriate workplace improvements and solutions, and provide them with valuable information about funding, training and other support they can receive when they employ someone who is blind or has low vision.

Streamlining the onboarding of new clients

Because the first stage of a client's journey with us is so critical, we've made significant improvements to our 'onboarding' process this year. After implementing enhancements to our Client Management System to streamline the process, we created and trained a specialist team of 25 staff. Called Service Connect, the team can provide all of our prospective or new clients with relevant information, support and contacts within and beyond Vision Australia, making the onboarding process easier, smoother, and more successful.



Above: As supervisor to our emotional and social support programs, Nemoy is one of the many people who are blind or have low vision who are employed at Vision Australia. Here he is displaying one of the many uses of his cane...swirling.

Independence

A Seeing Eye Dog can provide clients with the confidence and skills to travel and to enter any environment safely, confidently, and independently.



Above: Seeing Eye Dogs trainee instructor Carly taking one of our 'trainees' through his paces in our purpose-built training centre.

Vision Australia Seeing Eye Dogs continues to be the only national provider of dog guides, helping clients in every state and territory achieve independence in a variety of areas, especially travel. Seeing Eye Dogs remains a user-driven organisation providing one-on-one training and support that focuses on the individual client's mobility and independence.

Breeding Program

This year, we redesigned our Breeding Program Strategy to improve the quality of our Seeing Eye Dogs. This included reviewing the health and temperament of our breeding colony and retaining only the best 50%, and increasing the colony's percentage of proven dog guide genetic material from below 30% to above 40%.

Thanks to a successful collaboration with the Asian Guide Dog Breeding Network, we also received our first shipment of international semen from Kansai this year, which will enable us to continue to raise the quality of our breeding colony.

Even after introducing these more stringent quality measures, we again achieved our puppy production targets for the financial year, helping to ensure we can continue to provide our clients with Seeing Eye Dogs that have a suitable temperate and are well-trained.

International Working Dog Registry

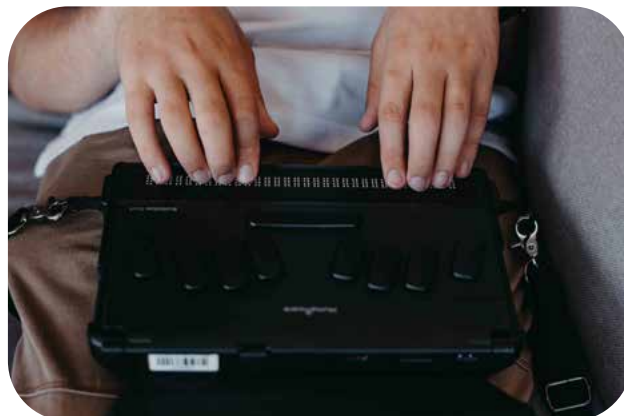
In November 2019, the International Working Dog Registry (IWDR) conducted a two-day professional development workshop for Seeing Eye Dogs staff. Industry leaders Jane Russenberger from Guiding Eyes for the Blind and Eldin Leighton from The Seeing Eye travelled from the USA to share valuable information about the Registry and the Behaviour Checklist (BCL).

The BCL is an internationally recognised temperament tool that is highly regarded for its objectivity. Subsequent to the workshops, the BCL has been embedded in our training program at essential checkpoints in the development of each Seeing Eye Dog.

The data from these assessments is analysed by the Registry which then determines which dogs are most likely to produce pups with temperamental traits that make them suited to the work of Seeing Eye Dogs. This means our breeding program can continue to improve the quality of our Seeing Eye Dogs and therefore the independence of our clients.



Above: Jenny Abela and Seeing Eye Dog Goldie



Above: A braille note taker has similar features to an iPad or tablet device, except it provides the user with braille and speech output. Devices like this are extremely useful for both work and study because of their portability and range of features.

Adult Learning Tech Days

Vision Australia helps adult clients learn about technology so they can connect with family and friends, as well as access information, pay bills, enjoy entertainment options, move around more confidently, and live more independently.

One of this year's successful events to support our adult clients in their use of technology was a series of Tech Days in NSW, Victoria, Queensland and WA. At each event, guests from suppliers, including Apple and Samsung, delivered presentations showcasing mainstream products, and members of our Access Technology team showcased our range of high-tech adaptive technology devices.



Above: Seeing Eye Dogs puppy-in-training Yaris

Early this year, Eleni became the first person in Australia to undertake training with a Seeing Eye Dog via Zoom.

Matched with Laura (her first Seeing Eye Dog) early in 2020, Eleni came to Melbourne to spend two weeks at the Seeing Eye Dogs' headquarters to complete her training, but just two days into the training, the COVID-19 pandemic meant she had to return home – without Laura.

Eleni has been legally blind for nearly 20 years and wanted a Seeing Eye Dog to help her become more active and independent, so it was disappointing to have to return home empty-handed. But, determined to have Laura and complete her training, she suggested training via Zoom.



Above: Eleni with Seeing Eye Dog Laura

So Laura was flown to Queensland and after being reunited with Eleni, the pair embarked on four weeks of intensive training all done remotely. A companion of Eleni's filmed her and Laura together, and expert Seeing Eye Dog instructors delivered training from the other end of the Zoom call.

Eleni has now graduated as a Seeing Eye Dog handler and enjoys having Laura by her side. "The four weeks of training were incredibly intense and full on," she said, "but we're working together every day and seeing improvements all the time. One of the first things I noticed is that now I look up and can see the world, while before I needed to keep my eyes on the ground. Now I can feel everything through Laura."

Lester Chraim, client services manager at Seeing Eye Dogs, said Eleni's graduation was a significant achievement for everyone involved. "We've never trained a handler and a dog like this before and we're very excited that Eleni and Laura have shown it can be done, because this provides us with another option to match and train even more people with a Seeing Eye Dog."

Print Accessibility

Our print accessibility services make printed materials accessible to clients in a variety of formats, including audio, braille, large print, and electronic text.

This year, we recorded 1,900 audio hours in our studios, added approximately 600 new titles to the Vision Australia Library, and recorded 74 new audio books. We also converted more than 100 editions of magazines (including three foreign language magazines) into audio versions that help keep clients up-to-date with current affairs as well as special interests that range from motoring and electronics to light entertainment.

In addition, we helped 150 individuals to access printed material ranging from knitting patterns and craft designs, to recipes, user manuals for mobile phones and kitchen appliances, novels and labels. We also created nearly 10,000 individualised documents for National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants who needed to access items such as letters and NDIS plans, and converted more than 9,600 print pages of student material for 21 universities around Australia.

"I just do it myself."

About one in seven Australians has some evidence of age-related macular degeneration, but her diagnosis hasn't stopped 90-year-old Sybil Smith from Greenfields in Western Australia. An early adopter of technology, Sybil has been delivering lectures and writing academic articles with the help of her OrCam MyEye 2.0, which she has been using for three years.

Wireless, lightweight and about the size of a finger, OrCam MyEye 2.0 attaches to one arm of a pair of glasses and can read aloud any printed or digital text, including in newspapers, books, menus, signs, and product labels.

"I don't have time waiting around until someone can read things for me," Sybil said. "I just do it myself in the time frame that suits me."



Above: Sybil Smith using her OrCam MyEye 2.0 to stay up to date with current events.

Self-advocacy

This year, Vision Australia hosted three self-advocacy webinars designed for clients and their families. In each webinar, a panel of experts provided information and tips on self-advocacy, with a focus on responding to discrimination, particularly when advocating to government, accessing education, and accessing digital information.

Taxi subsidies

Taxis and ridesharing services are a vital mode of transport for people who are blind or have low vision, enabling them to travel with safety, convenience and independence. Vision Australia, in conjunction with other disability support organisations, proactively lobbies governments to ensure the long-term security of the state-based schemes that subsidise the fares of these services.

This year, working with others in the disability sector, we led a successful campaign to influence NDIS policy, advocating for a nationally consistent NDIS transport funding model and retention of the taxi subsidy schemes. As a result of this campaign, the Federal Government committed to funding all state and territory taxi subsidy schemes for NDIS participants from 1 January 2020 to 31 October 2021.

In another success story, the NSW Government recently announced that it will replace the use of paper docketts for its taxi subsidy scheme with a smart card system. Vision Australia has long advocated for this change, which will make taxis and ridesharing services more accessible for many people.



Above: Subsidised taxi schemes give clients like Alimata increased independence, enabling them to travel safely and conveniently.

Technology

Check in and Chat

In March 2020, we launched an innovative series of free webinars called Check in and Chat, that not only gave audiences an opportunity to listen to experts presenting on their area of specialisation, but also to participate by asking questions in real time via Zoom. Designed to help our community stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic, the webinars covered an extraordinary range of topics from 'Finding the funny side of life' and 'Learn how to code through gaming' to 'Making your life easier with mainstream and assistive gadgets'.

Running for four months, the webinars were extremely popular, and recordings are available on our website.



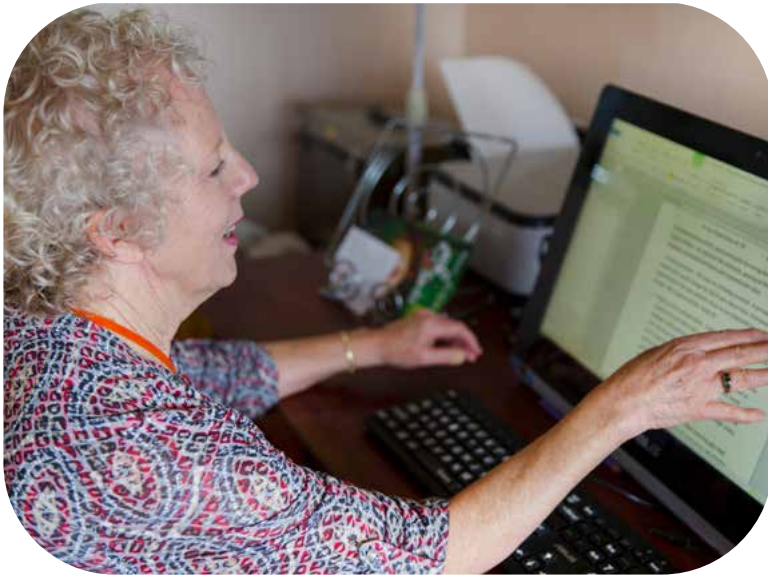
Above: For use on phones, computers, tablets, and smart TVs, Guide Connect makes connecting to the digital world easy, thanks to its many accessibility features.

Telehealth

Telehealth has long been an optional mode of service delivery, but one not used by many of our staff or clients. With the outbreak of COVID-19 suspending face-to-face service delivery, Vision Australia quickly rolled out telehealth training to all frontline staff, so we could continue to serve our clients.

Moving to telehealth services has meant clients and staff have become more used to interacting remotely, which gives us all increased options for the future. Telehealth has become so widely used that a record numbers of clients contacted the Assistive Technologies help line to get help setting up and using Zoom. We received 1,101 requests between February and June, compared to 288 for the same period last year, providing assistance that enabled clients to remotely attend all sorts of events that were available to anyone with Zoom.

While our teams are continuing to develop their competence and confidence in this method of delivery, we've seen some great innovations from our clinical and social inclusion service providers too. For example, community support workers have been running group-based and one-on-one activities in everything from leather work and woodwork, to arts and crafts, to music and comedy hours.



Left: When you can't visit friends and family, being able to use technology confidently can bring the world to you.

This year, to help our more senior clients use technology safely and confidently, we've rolled out several programs and initiatives.

Age is no barrier

Since so much can be done digitally these days, having the skills to use lots of different forms of technology is something all of our clients can benefit from.

During Get Online Week (14th to 20th October), we held more than 20 events across our branches, all focused on getting our more senior clients online safely and enjoyably.

We also partnered with the Good Things Foundation to deliver training in technology to clients aged over 55, and sourced an easy-to-use software package called Guide Connect that helps anyone learn how to get online and use a computer. Able to be used on phones, computers, tablets and smart TVs, Guide Connect uses simple step-by-step menus that walk and talk you through every task.

It also includes accessibility features such as being able to make text and icons as large as you need.

This year, we also trained volunteer 'digital mentors' to deliver a training program to senior clients to get them online using devices they were already familiar with. By learning how to connect to the internet, clients discovered a whole new world of online learning, reading, entertainment, banking, shopping, and much more. But nothing lit up their faces more than getting online to catch up with family and friends.

Social inclusion

Vision Australia Radio is a vital service addressing the information needs of people who are blind or have low vision or live with a print disability.

With an estimated monthly audience of 701,000, Vision Australia Radio makes a significant contribution to improving our clients' social inclusion by connecting them with people and covering a wide range of events.

Mother's Day Classic

One of the station's many highlights of this year was the broadcast of the Mother's Day Classic. Presented by special guest host Mary Delahunty and Vision Australia's Stella Glorie, it brought the Mother's Day Classic into people's homes all over Australia with a mix of interviews, music, news and much more. This year's Classic was a series of virtual events, bringing together supporters, researchers, VIPs, celebrities and many others, all celebrating 22 years of raising funds for research into breast cancer and joining forces to help communities stay healthy and connected.

Happy Birthday, Food For Thought!

Another of our highlights was the one-year anniversary of the first broadcast of the popular cooking show Food for Thought, hosted by Joy Nuske. As an avid cook who is blind, Joy brings new recipes and inspiring stories to her listeners each week, along with her fellow presenters Liz Chen and Jill Murray. "We're getting out into the broader community and letting them know what blind and low vision cooks are capable of," said Joy, who loves working in radio and was thrilled to be celebrating her one year (and counting) on air.

Partnering with 2020 Perth Festival

Continuing to build partnerships with numerous and diverse community events, this year Vision Australia Radio partnered with the 2020 Perth Festival, not only promoting the festival's many accessible events and spaces and interviewing festival organisers, but also providing advice on how the festival can best support the needs of people who are blind or have low vision.



Above: Food for Thought presenters, Joy Nuske and Liz Chen, delight and inspire listeners every week with their recipes and stories – and provide information about the cooking-related products available from Vision Store.

Vine to Wine

Wine lovers in and around Geelong are raising their glasses to a new weekly show called Vine to Wine which features interviews with winemakers from Bellarine Peninsula. Hosted by volunteers Peter Madden, who has low vision, and Ron Lock, the show keeps locals up to date with the latest offerings and events. With plans in place to broadcast into other regions, we're hoping more listeners will soon be able to enjoy this popular show.

ECU and Vision Australia Radio partnership

With COVID-19 removing the option for students at WA's Edith Cowan University to broadcast from on-campus studios, a collaboration with Vision Australia Radio solved their problems. Each day, 20 students based at their homes have been producing and broadcasting an hour-long show featuring a mix of interviews, readings and information. Produced as a hybrid of standard radio format and Radio for the Print Handicapped protocols, each program demonstrates not only what a successful collaboration can achieve, but also the role radio plays in keeping people connected.

2020 Radiothon

This year's Radiothon raised almost \$15,000, a pleasing increase on last year's amount, giving us a much-needed boost to funds used to help our volunteers keep our radio reading service on-air.

Audio description

Audio description provides an explanation of what is happening visually in television shows, films, plays, museums, exhibitions and other arts-related productions. It does this by weaving in between dialogue an additional narration that succinctly describes movements, gestures, transitions, props, settings, costumes and scenery.

This year, we've seen a number of important advancements in making visual experiences more accessible for our clients through the use of audio description.

Increased audio description available

For more than 20 years, Vision Australia has strongly advocated for audio description on free-to-air television. At present, Australia is the only OECD country not to offer audio description on free-to-air television, so we were pleased to see Australia's two public broadcasters, the ABC and SBS, launch a one-year audio description trial in June 2020. Both broadcasters are providing 14 hours a week of audio description content for a variety of shows.

Naturally, Vision Australia is keen for this to extend beyond the 12 months, and will continue to advocate for an expanded audio description offering on Australian television.

Three of the larger streaming services also provide audio description for selected titles in their catalogues, and our audio description team posted on our website a guide to content on these platforms featuring audio description.

Our audio description department is second to none in this emerging and vital field



Above: Guest presenter at this year's broadcast of the Mother's Day Classic was Gold Walkley award-winning journalist and author Mary Delahunty (right). Featuring music, interviews, news and much more, the broadcast celebrated 22 years of raising funds for research into breast cancer and joining forces with the Mother's Day Classic to help communities stay healthy and connected.

True Vision

This 30-minute documentary, featuring Vision Australia client Alfie and Vision Australia ambassador and Paralympian Jess Gallagher, is the first program available on ABC's iView to contain audio description since a 2015 trial.

The quality of the audio description is of an exceptional standard, demonstrating that our audio description department is second to none in this emerging and vital field.

Hyde Park Barracks

This 'living museum' in Sydney recently underwent a large renovation, which included incorporating audio description designed and scripted by Vision Australia's audio description team.

Features of the updated site include tactile experiences (including a tactile model of the entire site), audio way-finding, and an audio device with an optional version which provides an engaging audio description of each display.

Our audio description team designed the entire exhibition to be accessible for people who are blind or have low vision, and scripted all of the audio descriptions. This significant development makes Hyde Park Barracks the first Australian museum to fully integrate audio description into cutting-edge technology that triggers the relevant description when users come within proximity of each display. Not only does the technology give people who are blind or have low vision access to all the rich visuals, but also the ability to navigate this UNESCO World Heritage-listed site independently.

The work took seven months of planning and on-site scripting, followed by another month of user testing to ensure users will find it easy to use, engaging and informative.



Above: Australia's new 'bumpy' \$20 note was launched in October 2019. Celebrating the launch in Kooyong are, from left to right: Reserve Bank of Australia senior analyst Victoria Pymm, Reserve Bank of Australia assistant governor Lindsay Boulton, and Vision Australia manager of government relations and advocacy Chris Edwards.

Tactile \$20 banknote

In October 2019, the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) unveiled Australia's new \$20 banknote which features three raised bumps that enable people who are blind or have low vision to identify the note with ease.

The launch was held in Vision Australia's Kooyong office in Melbourne, where RBA assistant governor Lindsay Boulton acknowledged the assistance and support of Vision Australia and our community. The event received excellent media coverage, with 275 mentions across online, print, radio, and television.

After the planned release of a new \$100 banknote in the second half of 2020, all of Australia's banknotes will have raised bumps to better accommodate the needs of people who are blind or have low vision.

More choice for library members

Vision Australia's library members and clients are now able to access more books more easily.

This year's highlights include partnering with Bookshare, which is an online library of accessible ebooks for people with print disability, enabling us to increase the number of books available to our clients.

We also developed a new version of the accessible VA Connect smartphone app. VA Connect 2 allows members to use the enhanced library service on both iOS and Android platforms, and includes new improved features developed from client feedback.

Among other things, the app's accessible interface allows members to search for and read a vast range of books and other publications provided by our library, as well as subscribe to and receive magazines and daily newspapers on the day of publication.

Our volunteers



Above: Our wonderful volunteers, like Marion Dickinson, apply their skills, knowledge and generosity of spirit to everything they do, supporting our vital work in many different and wonderful ways.

Importance of our volunteers

Our volunteers share a wide range of skills and expertise – and generously donate incredible amounts of time to help us provide services to people who are blind or have low vision. This year, 2,341 volunteers worked in more than 50 different roles round Australia, contributing in total approximately one million hours of their precious time.

Some volunteers support clients in their home, while others work in the community, or at Vision Australia centres. Here's just a taste of what our volunteers give up their time to do:

- facilitate Telelink, Quality Living Groups and Peer Support Groups;
- support our staff to deliver services;
- drive clients;
- boost community awareness; and
- help with fundraising and marketing activities and events (including Carols by Candlelight).

Many of our volunteers make excellent use of their education and expertise. This year one of our new volunteers, having recently completed a Bachelor of Creative Arts (1st class Honours), decided to make learning toys, such as finger puppets, for our paediatric occupational therapists to use in their resource kits.

Another volunteer, who is a PhD student researching the challenges students who are blind or have low vision can encounter when studying the STEM subjects, is a learning support volunteer, who will soon be co-facilitating a new Code Jumper group in Western Australia.

New Corporate Puppy Carer Program

Puppy carer volunteers raise pups-in-training from eight weeks to 12-15 months, and are an integral part of a pup's journey to becoming a Seeing Eye Dog. Despite the many challenges of 2020, our wonderful volunteers continued in their role as puppy carers throughout the pandemic, and we saw an increased number of people interested in becoming a puppy carer.

From March to June 2020, we conducted puppy caring information sessions online, and were heartened that each of these sessions had more than double the number of attendees compared to sessions held in 2019.

There was also an enormous increase in the number of attendees at our information session held in conjunction with the Australian Education Union. Also held online, these sessions attracted six times the number of attendees compared to last year's in-person events.

Volunteering delivers many benefits for the volunteer as well as the recipients, but for many Australians, their volunteering options were limited during the pandemic. So we were delighted that our Puppy Caring Program was included in a list of the "Top 15 ways to volunteer from home in Australia" on the website of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award. A highly regarded program designed to help young people aged 14-24 find their purpose, passion and place in the world, the award released the list to encourage people to volunteer during the pandemic.

We were also extremely pleased to receive many more applications from people interested in becoming a puppy carer. In April alone, we received a record 267 applications, far exceeding our monthly average of 50 to 60 applications.

New corporate puppy carer program

After identifying that approximately 65% of puppy carers work, Seeing Eye Dogs launched an official Corporate Puppy Carer Program this year. The program provides workplaces with practical advice on how they can support their staff to be puppy carers and also highlights the benefits it can deliver, including employee wellbeing and increased employee collaboration.

The program allows the primary puppy carer to choose a support crew of up to three people in their workplace to help with caring for the pup. Participants receive an information pack that contains useful resources such as a sample workplace policy from program supporter Royal Canin, and a workplace risk assessment.

At the launch, Royal Canin shared their Corporate Puppy Carer Program experiences, as did other organisations who have employees who are puppy carers, including Melbourne Water, Plenary Group, and Major Road Projects Victoria (part of the Department of Transport).



Above: It might not look like it, but Velvet, one of our Seeing Eye Dogs pups-in-training, is learning valuable socialising skills... in between well-earned playtimes.

Supporting our volunteers

This year, as social distancing and other changes to our lives became the new normal, our dedicated volunteers across the country showed how adaptable they are. Despite the many challenges of 2020, our volunteers never wavered, some checking in on clients remotely via phone, while others held community group meetings via Zoom, or became virtual career mentors in our LEAP program, or participated in the Digital Mentor Program to learn how to remotely train older clients in using technology. Others decided to host trivia and social events via Zoom, while Vision Australia Radio volunteers learnt how to record and present radio at home, so Vision Australia Radio continued to broadcast 24/7 across Australia.

Everyone put their talents to work and showed how genuinely committed they are to ensuring their contributions make a real difference. Ever conscious of the need to support and recognise our volunteers, and keep them connected to us and each other during the pandemic, Vision Australia hosted regular Zoom volunteer catch ups. We also hosted live Q & A sessions for volunteers, featuring our CEO Ron Hooton and staff from our Volunteer Partnerships Office. Many of our volunteers told us they appreciated the support and ongoing connection with our staff and fellow volunteers.

National Volunteer Week in May 2020 provided another opportunity to show our volunteers how much we value their contributions. During the week, we held 12 virtual events for our volunteers, all of whom were invited to participate in the City of Melbourne's first ever live-streamed national volunteer Thank You event, where we were one of several prominent organisations and charities collectively celebrating and recognising volunteers.



Above: Thanks to our amazing Vision Australia Radio volunteers, including those seen here enjoying some time together, we were able to keep our radio broadcasting 24/7 during the pandemic.

Seeing Eye Dogs sincerely thanks our dedicated corporate volunteers who supported and participated in working bees throughout the year to keep our Kensington site and car fleet in tiptop shape. A special thank you to the staff from PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) and Red Energy whose support this year has been magnificent.

Inclusivity

Prestigious recognition of our accessibility work

Vision Australia was proud to be a finalist in the 'Government Award' category of the 2019 Australian Human Rights Awards, which recognise the outstanding contributions of individuals and organisations in promoting and protecting human rights and freedoms.

Partnering with the Royal Society for the Blind (SA) and the South Australian government, Vision Australia helped to develop an Online Accessibility Toolkit designed to help organisations and governments make their digital platforms accessible for a range of people including, but not limited to, those with disability.

The broader aim of the Toolkit is to create an environment where inclusion and accessibility are always an essential component of design and development of digital platforms and information.

Educating businesses about accessibility

Vision Australia's Digital Access team focuses on helping businesses and organisations understand how to improve their digital information presence and make systems accessible for people who are blind or have low vision. This year, Digital Access delivered 51 training sessions, 35 of which were open to the public, and 16 of which were delivered as in-house courses.



Above: Many people who are blind or have low vision use technology such as iPhones and Vision Australia's assistive technology to live and communicate independently.

They also launched a new Accessible Communications and Marketing course that provides illuminating and practical information to encourage organisations to make changes to their online communications and marketing.

When the COVID-19 pandemic removed the option of face-to-face interactions, the team rapidly adjusted to virtual delivery, and has so far successfully delivered 16 virtual training courses, hosted a series of live Q & A sessions, and presented at numerous meet up events. One of the advantages of virtual delivery is that people from all over Australia can easily attend the session from the comfort of their own home or workplace.

Making the COVIDsafe app more accessible

The Australian Government's COVIDsafe app aims to quickly identify people who may have been exposed to the virus. Developed rapidly to respond to the pandemic's spread, the original version of the app needed improvements, and the government engaged our Digital Access team to conduct an accessibility audit. As a result of the audit, along with the advocacy of Vision Australia and other disability groups, the app was updated in June this year. With improved descriptions of fields and back arrows, it now better accommodates the needs of people who use text-to-speech technology.

Celebrating the generosity of the Wicking Trust

The Wicking Trust has continued to generously provide financial support of our Digital Transformation Program this year, and we're pleased to report we've made some great developments.

One of the highlights was the development of a more personalised tool to communicate with clients about the NDIS and their individual packages, ensuring that clients receive their full entitlements as easily and smoothly as possible. The Program also developed and implemented the 'myVA' portal, which allows clients to access information about their use of our services such as the Vision Store and library.

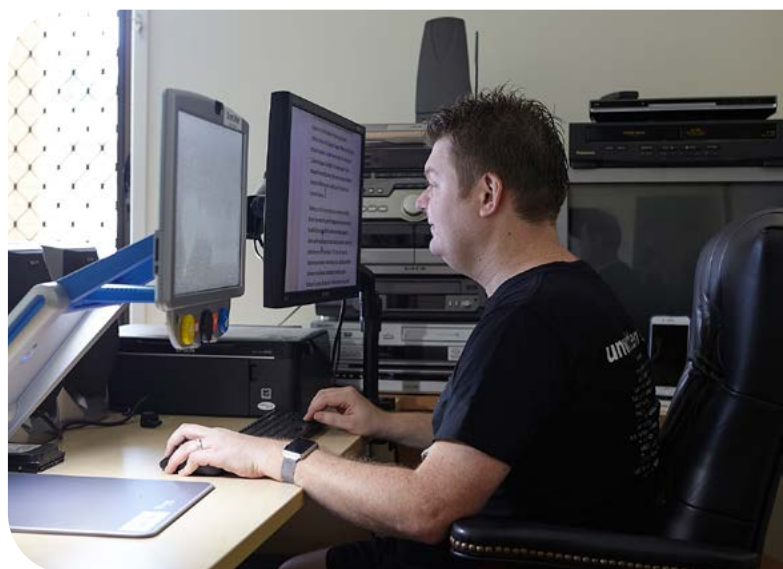
This year we also provided our staff with additional professional development to make sure they have the knowledge and skills to provide clients with accurate and friendly help about using our digital tools. It's also important that our staff can share and access information stored electronically so that we keep our operations efficient and our clients properly informed.



myVA open for business and thriving

Vision Australia recently launched 'myVA', an online portal that allows customers and clients to access and manage their individual use of our services. For example, users can access information about their purchases from Vision Store, extend the return date of items they've borrowed from the library, and keep track of their donations to Vision Australia.

More than 1,000 myVA accounts were created in its first three months, and hundreds of users have logged in multiple times, demonstrating that we've filled what was a gap in our services.



Above: Grant uses a range of equipment including video magnifiers and ZoomText in his home office to improve his access to information, services, and entertainment.

NSW's spectacular Spectacles Program

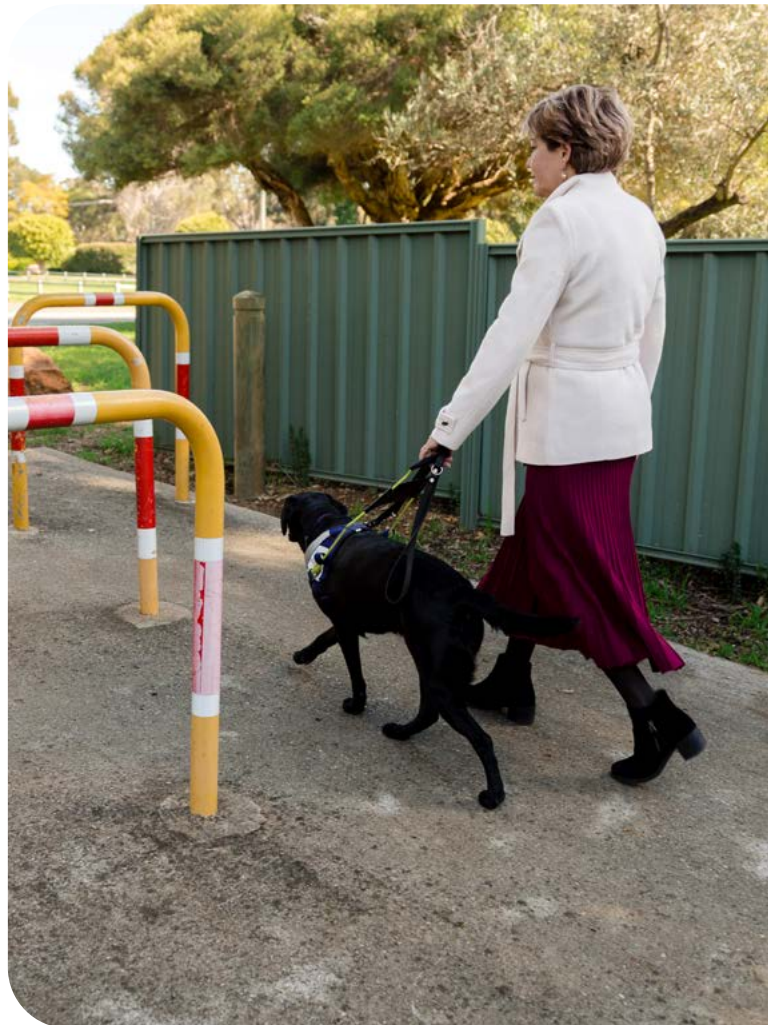
NSW Spectacles Program provides government-funded glasses and vision aids to eligible clients, providing a much-needed service. This year, the program has met some 'spectacular' milestones and achievements.

Of particular note are some stunning 2020 statistics:

- 54,197 spectacles were provided to 37,479 clients from 129 local government councils;
- approximately 3,000 children used the service this year;
- approximately 8,000 jobseekers received subsidised vision correction; and
- 26% of people who responded to satisfaction surveys about the program reported that vision correction improved their access to education.

NSW Spectacles Program also works hard to support those who might experience barriers in addition to those sometimes encountered by people who are blind or have low vision. This year, we received additional funding from Vision 2020 to deliver a further 3,000 pairs of spectacles to NSW Aboriginal residents, and worked closely with Sydney Homeless Connect and Vision Van Mobile Optometry to deliver optical care to homeless residents of NSW at the Sydney Homeless Connect Expo.

Funding for programs such as NSW Spectacles is often short-lived or tenuous, so we are delighted to report that we have secured a three-year extension to our contract with the NSW Government, which includes \$15 million of funding.



Above: Seeing Eye Dogs give people independence and confidence to travel safely even in complex environments.

Fundraising

Each year, Vision Australia receives wonderful support from thousands of people and numerous organisations across the country, and we are profoundly grateful to each and every one of our generous supporters.

Collectively, in the 2019-20 financial year, \$46 million was donated towards the provision of vital services to people who are blind or have low vision. This allows us to continue to provide our clients with excellent programs and services.

Whatever form your support takes – whether you contribute to our appeals, are a regular-giving puppy sponsor, buy lottery tickets, or attend our events – we say a grateful thank you.

Your collective contribution provides Vision Australia with 40% of our annual operating turnover and it is vitally important in order for us to continue to deliver services. Every one of us at Vision Australia greatly appreciates your generosity and thoughtfulness.

Many generous people support the important work of Vision Australia through bequests from their estates. Over the years, these contributions, large and small, have contributed significantly to our work. In 2019-20, \$18.4 million was donated by generous Australians who have left a lasting legacy and made a positive difference beyond their lifetime.



Above: Children enjoying a circus-themed event held at our Kooyong office.

Project EmployAbility

This is our new approach to working with children and their families. Starting in the early years, it addresses the skills and attitudes that can impact on an adult's ability to find work, and participate in the community.

For decades, people who are blind or have low vision have experienced levels of unemployment and under-employment much higher than the general community. They often have fewer choices as a result of how well prepared they are in the areas that are impacted by the lack of incidental learning, reduced access to learning materials and the perception of their abilities by the people around them. In order to combat this, Vision Australia services providers will use a coaching approach to work with families to address these barriers and beliefs. This approach has informed the redesign of our children's services program, Project EmployAbility.

We are extremely grateful to have received the generous support of a private foundation that has significantly underwritten this multi-year project.



Above: Max Schroder

Max Schroder

Philanthropist and educator Max Schroder has been generously supporting our work since 2004, with his total donations to Vision Australia exceeding \$1.7 million. “Vision Australia has a long and distinguished period of success in providing students with equipment to access their post-secondary education, which I have supported for many years,” Max said.

In 2020, however, he made a very special gift. “I take great pleasure in donating \$1 million to Vision Australia to help fund its charitable purposes.”

Max is well-known for his passion for education, particularly tertiary education, and how it can change people’s lives. “Education is the only way ‘up and out’ for those enduring disadvantage, so my general intent has always been to support the facilitation of education in any way possible, hence my funding of the Bursary program for many years.”

This recent donation will fund projects to develop education programs for our clients and assist them to access tertiary education.

His generosity to Vision Australia and other organisations is widely recognised and valued, and we are exceptionally grateful for his donations—and passion—that will benefit our clients for many years to come.

The cutest fundraiser ever

The annual Petbarn Foundation Appeal has been raising funds for our Seeing Eye Dog program since 2014, and has to date raised more than \$3 million, and supported the training of 70 Seeing Eye Dogs. This year, due to COVID-19, Petbarn Foundation and Vision Australia held a virtual event, reaching a wider audience of people watching and listening from the comfort of their homes.

With commentary from comedians Anthony ‘Lehmo’ Lehmann and Adam Rozenbachs, four of our pups and their trainers went head-to-head (and tail-to-tail) in the world’s first Seeing Eye Dogs Puppy Games, showcasing not just their unquestionable cuteness, but also their skills and the real-life challenges of being a Seeing Eye Dog.

Proudly supported by the Petbarn Foundation and Royal Canin, the Games thrilled audiences with three nail-biting competitions—the Petbarn Dogstacle Distraction Course, the Time Trial Challenge, and the Royal Canin Puppy Food Bowl Challenge.

The event was pre-recorded in June and released on July 23, which would have been the first day of the 2020 Olympic Games. And the winner? Undoubtedly, the Seeing Eye Dog Program as the event raised an incredible \$775,000. To find out which puppy won gold, search Petbarn Seeing Eye Dog Puppy Games!



Above: The four Seeing Eye Dogs pups-in-training with their puppy development trainers ready to compete in the inaugural Puppy Games.

Our amazing Black and White Committees

Every year, the members of three Black and White Committees (Double Bay, Maitland and Mudgee) work diligently to organise and host an array of spectacular events to raise funds to support Vision Australia's work.

This year's Double Bay events included the Balmoral Lunch, Lifestyle Lunch at Otto's, and their magnificent annual Black and White Ball. Held at the Art Gallery of NSW, the 2019 Ball marked the 83rd year the committee has partnered with Vision Australia, highlighting the hard work and generosity of so many people, particularly their patrons, office-holders and committee members. In December 2019, the Committee held their annual cheque presentation, where they presented Vision Australia with a cheque for \$215,000.

Further north in NSW, the Maitland Black and White Committee continued their tireless work to raise money to support clients who access services from our Newcastle office. For more than 50 years, Maitland Black and White Committee have organised several events throughout each year, including their flagship events—the Maitland Garden Ramble, and the Annual Luncheon.



Above: Members of the Double Bay Black and White Committee presented a cheque for \$215,000 to Vision Australia general manager of fundraising Ian Finlayson.

Attendances at both events are always fantastic, and a true testament to the hard work and enthusiasm shown by committee members. This year, the committee raised \$80,000—another magnificent effort.

In the Central West of NSW, the Mudgee Black and White Committee have been coordinating fundraising activities since 1994. These have included St Patrick's Day lunches, Opera in the Vines and garden days at local wineries. Last year, the Committee hosted 'A night with Lara Nakhle' who is both a performer on 'The Voice' and a client of Vision Australia.

The commitment, loyalty, and generosity of members of the Black and White Committees is truly outstanding, and we look forward to celebrating our partnership with them for many years to come. Thank you for your magnificent work.

Left: The annual Maitland Black and White Committee Garden Ramble was again a success this year, raising approximately \$50,000 for Vision Australia. This year, visitors were invited to 'ramble' through the gardens of eight properties across the Maitland region, including four magnificent heritage gardens.



Thanking our donors

Each year, we hold a variety of events to demonstrate our appreciation of our donors' generosity. Featuring special guests and awards, these events are a great way of acknowledging and saying thank you to the many people and organisations that support our work.

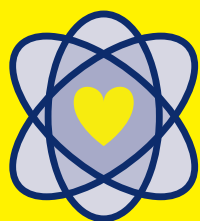
In November 2019, we hosted two special events in Sydney and Melbourne attended by clients, members of our leadership team, and many of our wonderful supporters.

At the Melbourne event, speakers included: Vision Australia CEO Ron Hooton; Chair Andrew Moffat; and Amy Thorne (mum of three-year-old Parker, who featured in the 2019 Carols by Candlelight). For many people, the highlight of this event was seeing Pete Smith OAM receive a Vision Australia Award to recognise his 15 years of dedicated work with Carols by Candlelight.

At the Sydney event, speakers included: the ABC's disability affairs reporter, Nas Campanella; Tanya Savva (mother of Mackenzie who lives with blindness); and Jenny Abela with Seeing Eye Dog Goldie. Guests were particularly delighted to hear 16-year-old Natalija Lambert speak at this event, as she was the 2008 face of Carols by Candlelight...as a four-year-old.



Above: This year's Sydney event to thank donors was a great success. Speakers included, from left to right: Jenny Abela and Seeing Eye Dog Goldie; Nas Campanella; and Tanya Savva.



Heartfelt thanks to members of fundraising committees

The members of the committees around Australia who raise funds for Vision Australia are generous and dedicated people. This year, through their many events and fundraising initiatives, they raised more than \$600,000 for Vision Australia.

We would like to take this opportunity to formally recognise and thank you for your work, dedication and amazing generosity.

Financial performance

Consolidated activities during the 2020 financial year (FY20) returned a surplus of \$28.37 million (2019: deficit of \$7.97 million), which after adjusting for non-recurring items, provided a surplus of \$1.29 million (2019: deficit \$11.34 million).

Whilst underlying operational performance continues to improve as Vision Australia adjusts from block to individualised government funding models, the large surplus is mainly attributable to gains made on the sale of the Macaulay Road property and the reversal of prior year impairments.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the organisation also reduced or constrained costs in a number of areas during the second half of the financial year, including by delaying project expenditure until the economic environment is more certain.

Summary of financial performance for the year ended 30 June 2020 (FY20)

The following Income and Expenditure statement has been extracted from the audited Annual Report:

Income and Expenditure statement	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Revenue.....	124,481	111,745
Purchase of materials, consumables and movement in inventories.....	(15,421)	(13,137)
Employee benefits expense.....	(65,438)	(66,567)
Depreciation and amortisation expense.....	(6,792)	(6,269)
Right-of-use assets depreciation expense.....	(1,935)	-
Interest expense on lease liability.....	(263)	-
Occupancy expense.....	(3,566)	(7,379)
Events and fundraising expense.....	(9,457)	(11,953)
Other expenses.....	(13,170)	(13,928)
Net gain/ (loss) on disposal of assets.....	16,711	(42)
Net impairment reversal/ (expense).....	3,298	(183)
Restructuring expenses.....	(181)	(252)
SURPLUS/ (DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	28,267	(7,965)

In FY20, the consolidated entity's revenue was \$124.48 million (2019: \$111.75 million), an increase of \$12.74 million (+11.4%). The growth in revenue comes from improved retail sales, legacies, Gifts in Wills, donations, and government support.

The following Balance sheet, extracted from the audited Annual Report, shows Total Equity of \$251.71 million which is \$24.18 million higher than 30 June 2019.

Balance Sheet at 30 June 2020	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Total current assets.....	50,421	40,605
Total non-current assets.....	228,768	213,754
Total assets	279,189	254,359
Total current liabilities	22,198	25,157
Total non-current liabilities.....	5,277	1,666
Total liabilities	27,475	26,823
Net assets	251,714	227,536
Equity.....		
Retained surplus.....	240,916	209,150
Reserves	10,798	18,386
Total equity	251,714	227,536

The cash position at the end of 30 June 2020 was \$34.82 million (2019: \$16.64 million), mainly as a result of proceeds on disposal of property, grant funding, and cost constraint during the financial year.

Despite the impact of COVID-19, net assets increased by \$24.18 million.

The on-going COVID-19 restrictions have resulted in a decline in the face-to-face client service hours provided since March 2020 and a decline in the market value of some property and investment portfolio assets. These assets are held long-term and their value generally moves in line with market fluctuations.

While this decline did not have a significant impact on the 2020 financial results (due to government support, cost management and the strength of donor support), the continuation of COVID-19 restrictions may have a negative impact on future financial results.

Vision Australia continues to refine its operating model to ensure prudent use of funds in support of our mission and ongoing financial sustainability.

Our full financial statements are available in standard and large print, braille, audio, DAISY and accessible digital formats. To order a copy in your preferred format, phone 1300 84 74 66 or visit our website www.visionaustralia.org.

Meet the wonderful individuals, businesses and organisations that have supported us this year with donations or funds of more than \$10,000, along with our corporate partners and fundraising committees.



Gifts in Wills

Una M Andrews
Rodney J Ball
Susan M Bateman
Emma Baybara
Patricia B Bean
Henrietta Beck
Margaret A Beeton
Eileen M Birch
Jean M Bradshaw
Olive E Branz
Bettye F Brown
Barry G Callaway
Doreen F Canavan
Mavis Carruthers
Thelma R Clarson
Warren Collison
Shirley J Cooling
Gweneth J Cooper
Doreen E Crawley
Norma P Crowley
Donald Davies
Nancy Denson
Mavis J Doherty
Albert E Drew
Guilbert W Dulfer
Eric J Elliott
Patricia M Evans
Erwin Fabian
Lesley Farrant
Joyce E Fildes
Warwick J Flecknoe

Elizabeth Fraser
Joyce Gibbons
Elizabeth M Gibson
Dorothy J Hall
Raymond E Haswell
Roger B Heslop
Ruth Heywood
Joan S Hinze
Ethel M Hird
Beth Howard
Daryl G Howard
Susan E Hutchinson
Lilian F Ings
Violet K Knight
Dorothea Konwalinka
Dianne M M Krummel
Mary G Lawrence
Phyllis R Leavers
Alan S Lee
John H Liddle
Ross W Lindsay
Jean F MacDonald
Philip H MacFarlane
Patricia L McDonald
Norman Medson
John E Mitchell
Ralf Moller
Maud Morgan
Nellie M Murdoch
Audrey F Nancarrow
Janette M Newhall

Alan P Nielsen
Margaret O'Dwyer
Frances H Parkinson
Marcus Quinlivan OAM
Robert G Rabone
Elizabeth C Rooke
Isabell Ross
Allan A Rowling
Valerie I Ryan
Iris Sadler
Norbert Schober
Evelyn F Service
Yvonne A Smith
Jeanette Smithson
Michael S Stansfeld
Judith F A Stemberge
Catherine C Taylor
Linda Tilbrook
Jessie A Towndrow
Monica H Tracey
Joyce W Tyrer
Nancy J Valentine
Nea Van Der Kuur
Josephine Virgona
Kevin W Wall
Lorna Walters
Truda Wansley
Marjorie E West
Jean M Williams
Dr Felice Zaccari OAM
Erna Zamelczyk

Trusts and foundations

Amy Irene Christina Ostberg Estate
Arthur Leonard Raper Charitable Trust
Bell Charitable Fund
Centenary Foundation - Scott Family
Bequest
Clifford Abbott Davidson Charitable Trust
Collier Charitable Fund
David Allen Trust
Dick and Pip Smith Foundation
E C Blackwood Charitable Trust
Edith Jean Elizabeth Beggs Charitable Trust
Eric Crawford Memorial Fund
Estate of Robert John Finlay
Estate of the Late Georgena Elizabeth
Bradshaw
Estate of The Late John Frederick Wright
Flannery Foundation
Flora and Frank Leith Charitable Trust
Florance Hattersley Trust
Floroyol Seeing Eye Dogs Foundation
Frederick Shepherd Trust
Gambling Community Benefit Fund
Gregory Patrick and Marie Dolores Farrell
Foundation
Henry James Francis Estate
Hughes Family Trust Fund
Ian McLeod and Madge Duncan Perpetual
Charitable Trust
J O and J R Wicking Trust
Jane Williamson Charitable Trust
Janet Calder MacKenzie Charitable Trust
John and Laurine Proud Family Estate Trust
Kenneth Martin Estate
Leslie Francis Gill Trust
Lily Maude Payne Charitable Trust
Lola Poynton Memorial Fund
Marjorie Scott Trust
Marrich Charitable Foundation
Olive Woods Trust
Oscar William Eschenhagen Edwards Trust
Perpetual Foundation - Sibley Endowment
Philandron Foundation
Russell McKimmin Charitable Trust
Russell Vontom Charitable Trust
S.T.A.F - Lockwood Murray Hogben Bequest
S.T.A.F. - Frederick John Banbury
S.T.A.F. - John and Sylvia Lindsay Donation
S.T.A.F. - Judith De Garrod Donation
S.T.A.F. - Thomas James Malcolmson and
Winifred Gleeson
Skipper-Jacobs Charitable Trust
The Andrew and Geraldine Buxton
Foundation
The Corella Fund
The Dennoch Fund
The Donald Fraser Family Fund
The Edith Kemp Memorial Trust Fund
The Estate of the Late William H Fernie
The Hardie Family Bequest
The Hargrove Foundation
The Howard Glover Perpetual Charitable Trust
The Kemvan Trust
The Lin Huddleston Charitable Foundation
The Marian and E.H. Flack Trust
The Muffin Foundation
The Orloff Family Charitable Trust
The Profield Foundation
The Sally Sinisoff Trust Fund
The Vernon Sinclair Fund
The William Mansel Higgins and Dorothy
Higgins Charitable Trust
The Woodend Foundation
Westfield Local Heroes
William Andrew Bon Charitable Trust

Individuals

Mr R and Mrs E Albert
Mrs R Andre
Ms J Cain
Mr B and Mrs N Callaghan
In memory of Colin Colgan
Mr D and Mrs A Craig
Mrs I Dalrymple
Mr D Davis
Mr R Edwards
Mr V Firkbank
Mr J and Mrs H Freeman
Michael Fung and Anne-Marie Tosolini
Mr Donald and Mrs Chelsea Green
Mrs Fay Hudson
Mr R Kaiser
Mr C Lin
Mrs E Lustig
Mr P and Mrs J Mannix
Mrs W McPherson
Dr B McSherry
Miss A Miller
Jeanette and David Milston
Mr J Newman
Marc Quinlivan OAM
Mr B and Mrs J Royle
Mr M Schroder
Miss J Sheridan
June Smith

Organisations

Ernst & Young
Focus Eyecare Studio
Reserve Bank of Australia
Security Portman Pty Ltd

Committees/Auxiliary

Black and White Committee, Double Bay (NSW)
Black and White Committee, Maitland (NSW)
Black and White Committee, Mudgee (NSW)
Cohuna Friends of Vision Australia Committee (VIC)
Euroa Friends of Vision Australia Committee (VIC)
Friends of Vision Australia Coorparoo (QLD)
Gisborne Friends of Vision Australia Committee (VIC)
Griffith Friends of Vision Australia (NSW)
International Committee of Vision Australia (NSW)
Kerang Friends of Vision Australia Committee (VIC)
Kiama and District Friends of Vision Australia (NSW)
Kyneton Friends of Vision Australia Committee (VIC)
Skipton Friends of Vision Australia (VIC)
Wangaratta Friends of Vision Australia Committee (VIC)
Yarrowonga Friends of Vision Australia Committee (VIC)
Yass Friends of Vision Australia (NSW)

Registered clubs

Canley Heights RSL and Sporting Club
Club Central
Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club

Seeing Eye Dogs corporate partners

Petbarn
Petbarn Foundation
Royal Canin

Carols by Candlelight

Major partners

IGA
ACM – SMMB
Cats – Universal
Marriott International Group

Media partners

Channel 9
News Corp Ltd
3AW
Smooth FM
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TEG Entertainment Store
Evan Evans
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Vision Australia

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Vision Australia Seeing Eye Dogs

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info@seda.org.au



seeingeyedogs



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Vision Australia Radio

Tune into our radio stations on these frequencies. Vision Australia Radio is also broadcast over digital stations in Melbourne, Perth and Adelaide.

New South Wales

Albury/Wodonga

101.7FM

Victoria

Bendigo

88.7FM

Geelong

99.5FM

Melbourne

1179AM /VA Radio DAB+

Mildura

107.5FM

Shepparton

100.1FM

Warragul

93.5FM

Warrnambool

882AM

South Australia

Adelaide

1197AM /VA Radio DAB+

Western Australia

Perth

990AM /VA Radio DAB+

Northern Territory

Darwin

VA Radio DAB+

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